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Review.

SCS #1430

Thomas F. Torrance

A

NARRATIVE

OF THE

RISE, PROGRESS, AND CONCLUSION

OF THE

PROCESS

AGAINST

MR MACLAGAN,

MINISTER OF MELROSE.

WITH REMARKS.

HAWICK:

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1785.

A

NARRATIVE, &c.

WITH much anxiety has Mr Maclagan laboured to bring the unhappy proceſs carried on againſt him to a *righteous* iſſue: For to him it has been a long ſcene of the deepeſt mortification and diſtreſs. Though he is at laſt entirely acquitted *from the crime laid to his charge*, by the final ſentence of the Preſbytery; yet this is far from making a compenſation to him for what he has ſuffered. Actuated by that pride of character which nothing can perſuade him to relinquiſh, he cannot refuſe himſelf the conſolation of offering to the world a candid account of this extraordinary tranſaction, that his juſtification may appear to have proceeded upon the moſt ſolid grounds. It is for this purpoſe that he entreats a calm attention to the following narration of facts, which are fully proven; and to the reaſoning which is founded upon them.

MR MACLAGAN was ordained miniſter of Melroſe in March 1768, and had the good fortune to enter upon his charge with the general approbation of the people.

During the whole courſe of his miniſtry, his only buſineſs was the *duty of his ſtation;* his only pleaſures were *domeſtic;* and his only amuſement *a ſmall farm* of about twenty-five acres. Thus he hoped to have ſpent his life in no mean degree of public uſefulneſs, with much ſatisfaction to himſelf; and he had the vanity to hope, that he would thus maintain the friendſhip of good men, a ſteady independence, a good conſcience, and the goodwill of his people. He ſoon however found, that the beſt concerted plans, where there is any dependence upon the opinions of others, are very uncertain in their operations. He had a very numerous ſeſſion, and a pariſh in which there are betwixt four and five hundred heritors, or feuars, and it is no wonder that amongſt them occaſions of diſcontent appeared from time to time. Becauſe Mr Maclagan refuſed to be directed by his ſeſſion, whom to employ as his aſſiſtants when he gave the ſacrament; becauſe he refuſed to appoint a faſt-day in the midſt of harveſt; becauſe he preached upon thankſgiving, ſobriety, and charity, annually, when God had crowned the year with plenty; becauſe, with the conſent of his heritors, he ſought and obtained an augmentation of ſtipend; becauſe he applied for a deſignation of a graſs-glebe; and becauſe he rented the ſmall farm above mentioned,—from all theſe cauſes, and without any aſſignable cauſes at all, diſcontents frequently aroſe, and were by factious and whimſical people carried a conſiderable length. The only method taken by him to quiet and diſpel thoſe diſcontents was, a ſteady and uniform diſcharge of his duty, and an uniform neglect of thoſe perſons who were the inſtruments of them—ſo their deſigns were fruſtrated. Happily for themſelves the pariſh kept together, and Mr Maclagan maintained as much reſpect as he deſired, or any man *ought to deſire,* who wiſhes for no more than to be uſeful in his pariſh as a miniſter. Thus, not without a good degree of ſatisfaction, for many years did he carefully

carefully discharge the duties of his public character; and in his private family he has the pleasure to think, that for mutual affection, for uninterrupted peace, and the cheerful discharge of every relative duty, his family merited to be considered as examplary.

Mr MACLAGAN had not lived long in Melrose, when he had occasion to employ in his service a daughter of one Andrew Mein, and almost ever since, till lately, some one or other of that numerous family have been his servants, who always did their business with ability and faithfulness. Isobel, the youngest of them, was his servant at Martinmas 1778, when Janet Bunzie *, now wife of James Ramsay, became her fellow-servant, whose very exceptionable conduct and extreme impertinence, often occasioned her to receive severe reprimands both from her master and mistress. At the same time one Will. Aily entered to Mr Maclagan's service, this man (though unknown to his master) had lived a life of profligacy, he had debauched a young woman, by whom he had a child, the expence of whose maintenance, with his other vices, kept him in perpetual poverty; and he was so involved in debt to the mother of the young woman, for maintaining his bastard, that he wisely determined to marry the girl, to save him from distress upon that article; but, unfortunately for him, when he came to live with Isobel Mein, he became melancholy and miserable, and could he have prevailed with her would have broke through all his former engagements; but being disappointed there, he conceived that inveterate aversion which made him join in league with Bunzie against the family in general, especially against Isobel Mein, whom they represented as favoured in the

* The reader will remember carefully to distinguish betwixt the two Janet Bunzies, mentioned in the course of this narration, by which confusion will be avoided.

house

houſe with an unreaſonable partiality. As they were very noiſy in their quarrels, Mr Maclagan, who could never endure any diſpeace in his family, was ſometimes obliged to interpoſe. Aily and Bunzie, in revenge of this, had the malice to repreſent what they called his partiality, in ſuch colours, as gave firſt riſe to the unhappy ſtories which have ſince circulated to the diſhonour of his character, though at that time they had neither the contrivance nor villany to fix upon any particulars: And againſt both of them proofs have been *brought* before the Preſbytery, of *moſt improper* conduct, eſpecially againſt Bunzie, whoſe *malice and falſehood have been fully proven.*

In the month of March 1779, by a very melancholy and fatal accident Mr Maclagan loſt a lovely boy; and Iſobel Mein, under whoſe care he was, then left the family, and never was once again under his roof. Through the horrors of mind occaſioned by the death of the child, who ſuffered in ſome meaſure by her careleſneſs, Iſobel was thrown into violent hyſterical diſtreſs, and her friends looked upon her as dying. Upon the day on which the child was interred, after having been repeatedly ſent for, Mr Maclagan went to ſee Iſobel, and found her in violent convulſions, and perfectly inſenſible. This viſit was one of the particulars which Aily and Bunzie repreſented againſt Mr Maclagan, as an evidence of too ſtrong attachment to her; and, what is ſtill more wonderful, numbers in the pariſh took occaſion to condemn him for having performed this piece of painful though indiſpenſible duty.——It was then that he firſt underſtood, that the family of the Meins was ſo much noticed, as to be the object of an *ancient parochial diſlike;* and that two of his predeceſſors had diſpleaſed the pariſh by the attention they had paid them;—it was then he firſt learned, that ſtories were circulating to his prejudice, and this indeed (he being conſcious of perfect innocence) filled him with inexpreſſible

ble indignation. He then first found it difficult to preserve that equanimity and steadiness he had hitherto maintained; for he found his passions ready to mix in the very discharge of his ministerial duties, though cool reflection always advised to despise the unfounded calumny, and behave as if it never had existed; especially as it then made little or no impression upon the parish.

MATTERS continued thus, in perfect quietness, till the end of the year 1781; during the most part of which time Isobel Mein lived with her father in Newstead: But, at this time, one Robert Bunzie, a feuar in Newstead, whose house adjoins to Andrew Mein's (for the most obvious reasons as will appear afterwards), began again to create and circulate calumnies against Mr Maclagan. Exceedingly irritated at this fresh and unprovoked attack, he went to one Robert Grierson an elder, who was always unfriendly, and afterwards became the most violent of his persecutors—to this man Mr Maclagan went, knowing him to be a man of abilities, *solicited his assistance* that he might be enabled to obtain legal examplary redress for the injury under which he suffered. And Grierson very frankly promised his aid; but never was Mr Maclagan more mistaken. He did not then know, that Grierson lived in particular intimacy with Bunzie,—Bunzie's infamous sister Janet had been his servant, imbibed her first principles under his tuition, and that in all her varied fortunes he had still maintained his ancient friendship to her, as he himself afterwards confessed upon *Oath*. Instead therefore of finding him an useful assistant, Mr Maclagan found *him* a secret insidious and persevering enemy. Grierson engaged Will. Mabon, another elder, they joined together to support Bunzie; and, as Isobel Mein was then with child, after these three had concerted together, Grierson went to her on purpose to advise her to leave the country and go to Edinburgh

burgh, which advice was extraordinary indeed for elders to give to a woman in her ſituation, and the moſt peſtilentious which could have been given for Mr Maclagan's intereſt.

A little before this, Robert Bunzie, who well knew Iſobel Mein's ſituation, had ſent for his ſiſter Janet * from Edinburgh, that ſhe might prevail with Iſobel to abſcond; and, in conſequence of her perſuaſion, and the advice of Grierſon, ſhe actually, *betwixt terms*, went into Edinburgh, and was received and lodged by Janet Bunzie. Robert followed her in a little while; and probably to avoid ſuſpicions from his frequent viſits to town, he that ſpring took up the trade of meal-making, which he never did before nor ſince; and every thing was managed by Janet to his perfect ſatisfaction. It was at that very time that Janet was heard ſwear "by the LORD GOD ſhe would ruin "Mr Maclagan, for threatning to proſecute her brother "for ſcandal," as mentioned above.

WHEN Iſobel Mein's ſituation could be concealed no longer in Janet's houſe, ſhe went and took a room for her in one David Maxwell's, in the Canongate; ſhe then beſpoke a midwife for Iſobel, telling her not to expect much payment; "for as the man was only a farmer to "whom the girl was with child, he could not afford much." She provided Iſobel with all her victuals; ſhe, *and none elſe*, gave her money; ſhe paid the midwife; employed and paid

* This Janet is a woman of notable fame, ſhe was long a kept miſtreſs to a married man, ſhe afterwards became bawd to his pleaſures with other women, kept a houſe and received an annuity for that purpoſe; and, being at laſt abandoned by him, ſhe then kept a houſe for the entertainment of any body; during all which time of her being kept miſtreſs, procureſs, and bawdy-houſe keeper, ſhe had her brother for her confident, and Grierſon, for her unchangeable friend.

the

the nurſe, provided every thing neceſſary for the child; and it was agreed amongſt them, that when it was weaned the child ſhould be ſent to live with Robert in the country, paſs for a gentleman's child, and be taken care of under the eye both of the father and mother. During all this time that Iſobel Mein was in Edinburgh, neither Mrs Maxwell with whom ſhe lived, nor the nurſe, nor midwife, nor any perſon on earth ever ſaw Mr Maclagan near Iſobel, nor knew of his taking any concern whatever in her or her child, however boldly the libel averred the contrary: Yea, previous to this, though the libel ſpeaks of many meetings in various places for criminal purpoſes, yet have not the proſecutors produced a ſingle witneſs who ever ſaw them together in any ſuſpicious place or circumſtance, or who ever ſaw Mr Maclagan in any of the places mentioned in the libel, either by night or by day.

Isobel Mein, after being delivered of her child, returned to Newſtead in the month of July 1782; and it appears from the proof, that her intimacy with Bunzie was as cloſe, if not cloſer, then ever, as he ſeems to have made a practice of viſiting her when ſhe was in bed in the mornings, after her father had gone to his work, and there was nobody in the houſe to interrupt them. Theſe viſits, no doubt, gave occaſion for her ſecond journey to Edinburgh, when ſhe arrived there, in June 1783, ſhe was kindly entertained by Janet Bunzie, who told Iſobel's brother that ſhe had provided a place for her. Janet was by this time married to one Reid, a weaver, a man who ſeems equal to herſelf in every bad quality. With theſe people Iſobel maintained the cloſeſt intimacy, till it was interrupted by her refuſing to join with them in their iniquitous ſchemes they deviſed againſt Mr Maclagan. When the time drew near for Iſobel being delivered of her ſecond child, Janet Bunzie, who foreſaw the impoſſibility of her brother carrying on this traffick any longer, ſhe who

had long since sworn "by the LORD GOD she would ruin Mr Maclagan," having now meditated a deep scheme of villany, sends for her brother, who accordingly went into Edinburgh in July, then and there it was, that the plan of *ruin*, devised and sworn against Mr Maclagan by Janet, was ripened for execution; which was no less than boldly to accuse him as father of Isobel's child, and thereby save her brother the shame and expence under which he justly deserved to suffer: And, this being determined upon, Robert Bunzie returned to the country. At this time the voice of suspicion was not heard, the parish of Melrose was at perfect peace; but after Bunzie returned, and had several meetings with Grierson and Mabon, they jointly resolved to publish their lies against Mr Maclagan. The whole scheme for that purpose was laid upon the Saturday, immediately before celebrating the Lord's Supper at Melrose; and, with this dark purpose brooding in their hearts, Grierson and Mabon sat down with Mr Maclagan at the table of the Lord! What may not be expected from persons capable of such shocking prophanation? In the dead of the night of the Monday thereafter Grierson set off for Edinburgh, and no sooner arrived there than he went to a near relation of Bunzie's, he sent for William Reid, Janet Bunzie's husband; and having concerted their plans together, and in vain endeavoured privately to bring Isobel Mein into their measures, they then collected a number of *lawless people*, forced her down to Leith, affronted her and scandalized Mr Maclagan before a rabble in the street; and then carried her before a magistrate, to whom she readily confessed she had born a child, but not knowing the hand that Bunzie had in this violence, she peremptorily refused to name the father of her child;—only saying, "they would find him a different person from "the one they *wished her to accuse*." After this, Grierson once again visited Reid and his wife, helped to bring their story into form, then returned to the country and boldly

disseminated

diſſeminated their falſehoods. In the mean time, Reid and his wife fly through Edinburgh with their calumnies; they went to the nurſe, to the midwife, and ſeveral others, and were guilty of tampering with them, and of the boldeſt attemps to bribe and ſuborn ſome of them to bear falſe witneſs againſt Mr Maclagan: For which iniquitous conduct they ſtand condemned by the judgement of the Commiſſion of the laſt General Aſſembly, and muſt be marked with the infamy of it for ever.

Mr MACLAGAN was filled with amazement at the boldneſs of theſe proceedings, and the moment he became acquainted with them, reſolved to ſearch the matter to the bottom, by a ſevere but legal enquiry, which he judged would be a ſure, though ſlow vindication of his character. He ordered Iſobel Mein to be inſtantly ſummoned before Melroſe ſeſſion; but the confederacy prevented this ſummons from being executed, and obtained a falſe return from the officer. The ſeſſion ordered her to be ſummoned a ſecond time; but *the confederacy* being now afraid ſhe would tell the truth, William Mabon *went* to Edinburgh, for no other viſible purpoſe but to prevent her from coming out. He lodged three nights with Janet Bunzie, and then employed an agent, one Mr Gray, a writer,—a man of ſuch indefatigable induſtry and zealous ſervice, *that if ever Mr Maclagan has a bad cauſe to agent, he will certainly employ him*. By various miſrepreſentations, he and Mabon obtained warrants, for laying Iſobel Mein in priſon, at the very time that they employed the Kirk-treaſurer, to bring her to make a judicial confeſſion; hoping more eaſily to bring her to their meaſures with the terrors of a priſon before her eyes, then if ſhe were examined in the country, and were at liberty. They employed and paid Reid, in all their illegal and dirty jobs, to which they themſelves could not ſet face; and when Reid and his wife could be no longer of uſe to them in Edinburgh, they were carried, betwixt

terms, to Newſtead in the dead of winter, that they might be aſſiſting to inflame the pariſh; and that they might be at hand and under correction, if ever they ſhould be called as witneſſes before the Preſbytery.

In the mean time, Iſobel Mein having eſcaped from their ſearch, and abſconded for ſome time; and being full of terror and in great want, in her extremity applied to the midwife, informed her of her ſituation, and told her that Robert Bunzie, brother to Janet Bunzie, was father of her child: By her advice, ſhe implored the aſſiſtance, and put herſelf under the protection of the Kirk-treaſurer; who, according to his duty, and agreeable to the deſire of Mabon, Gray, and Reid, brought her before a magiſtrate, where ſhe emitted a judicial declaration, which ſhe ſubſcribed; wherein ſhe accuſed Robert Bunzie as the father of her child.

During all this time the elders were exceedingly induſtrious in impreſſing the pariſh with a perſuaſion of Mr Maclagan's guilt; they indeed, for a while preſerved an appearance of moderation, and attended public worſhip; but, this not ſerving their purpoſe, they ſoon threw off the maſk, and agreed together not to hear Mr Maclagan any more, and alſo to ſcatter the pariſh: For this purpoſe they ordered the weaver's gallery, where moſt of the elders uſually ſat, to be ſhut up, which was accordingly done immediately; and they themſelves came, when the congregation were aſſembling, and ſtood at the church doors upbraiding and ridiculing the people for going to hear Mr Maclagan. During the time of public worſhip they went home, or amuſed themſelves ſome where near the church; but returned to the doors of the church when the congregation was diſmiſſing, ſtill ridiculing thoſe who attended. This they did for ſeveral days,

days, inſtigating the very children to rudeneſs, until it became *unſafe* for any perſon to attend divine ſervice.

CONSIDERING theſe *outrageous* proceedings, Mr Maclagan had little hope that Iſobel Mein would obey the ſummons, and attend the ſeſſion of Melroſe; or, if ſhe did, that matters could be conducted there with any degree of decency. He was then indeed utterly at a loſs what plan to purſue, when the ſeſſion relieved him from this perplexity, by refuſing to ſummon Iſobel Mein a third time; which, being contrary to form, furniſhed him with an opportunity of bringing the matter before the Preſbytery. He immediately complained to them of the conduct of the elders; and beſought them to enquire into the foundation of the reports raiſed, by which his character and uſefulneſs were ſo much injured: He intreated them to cauſe ſummon Iſobel Mein before themſelves, that they might know from her the truth of the matter: Alſo to cauſe ſummon ſeveral others for examination, who, from their particular connection with her and Janet Bunzie, had intimate acceſs to know the truth. Mr Maclagan had good hope, that, by examining theſe, a full diſcovery would be made of the whole tranſaction. Accordingly all theſe perſons were cited to appear at Selkirk upon the firſt Tueſday of December 1783; but before that time came, it was known at Newſtead that Iſobel Mein had accuſed Robert Bunzie, as above ſet forth. This occaſioned great diſtreſs, and many conſultations to the combination; and it became now their great object, either to prevent Iſobel from coming to the Preſbytery at all, or, by ſome means, to perſuade her to retract her declaration. To accompliſh this purpoſe Mabon firſt applied to her brother John Mein, and offered him money if he would go along with him to Edinburgh to ſee his ſiſter; upon this condition, "That he would allow him (Mabon) to have a private "converſation with Iſobel, before he, her brother, ſaw

or

" or ſpoke to her." Failing in this artful ſcheme, they next applied to her other relations to go and meet her on her way to Selkirk; who accordingly went, and who *depone*, " That they went on purpoſe to tell their ſiſter " Iſobel what an uproar the town of Newſtead would " be in, if ſhe gave her bairn to Bunzie; and that " they would be upon her when ſhe went home." To which ſhe gave the following anſwer, " I have made " my declaration in Edinburgh already; and they whom " I have given it to has wrought well for it, and well " deſerves it, and they ſhall get it,"

UPON that day the threatenings of theſe meſſengers began to be realized at Selkirk, the place where the Preſbytery met; a great multitude of people from Melroſe, Newſtead, and other places, headed by Grierſon, Mabon, and Bunzie, appeared early there, and behaved in the moſt inſulting and outrageous manner,—in ſo much as to oblige her to apply for protection to a member of court on the ſtreet, and afterwards to run away from the place; and it was with much difficulty ſhe was brought back to be examined. Yea, the court themſelves could do no buſineſs until they obtained the protection of the civil magiſtrate; for the mob threatened to pull down the houſe where they ſat, *if Iſobel Mein was not delivered up to their power; and it was in theſe circumſtances*, in midſt of *their* hiſſings, and ſcoffings, and threatenings, and in the very preſence of Bunzie himſelf, that Iſobel Mein emitted her ſolemn judicial declaration, wherein ſhe confeſſed, " that ſhe had born a " child, and that Robert Bunzie was the father of it; " that his ſiſter Janet had perſuaded her to go to Edin- " burgh, promiſing to conceal her ſituation; that ſhe " had maintained her, gave her money, paid the mid- " wife, nurſe, *&c. &c.* and ſettled the plan for diſpo- " ſing of the child after it was nurſed; at the ſame

" time

" time ſolemnly declaring, that Mr Maclagan never was " guilty with her, never gave her money," *&c. &c.* After ſhe had made this declaration, on the evening of that day ſhe went to Newſtead with ſome of her relations, and there ſhe experienced the *violence* which had been threatened againſt her for giving her child to Bunzie. The ſpirit of the mob which began to appear at Selkirk burſt forth at Newſtead like fury, and put both her life and the lives of her relations in the moſt immenent danger ;—the mob burſt open their doors, and with *ſhowers of ſtones* demoliſhed their windows ; ſo that her friends and their little ones were obliged to fly for ſafety, whilſt Iſobel was left alone in midſt of an inflamed multitude, who did every thing in their power to compel her to free Robert Bunzie, and accuſe Mr Maclagan. When they had filled all with terror and diſtraction, having continued thus till paſt midnight *without prevailing*, at that late hour deputations of elders, with many attendants, were ſent to catch the critical moment,—they earneſtly ſolicited Iſobel to retract *her declaration*. Now they varied their manner of addreſs, they cajoled her with promiſes of protection and the good-will of the whole pariſh ; yea, in the name of the pariſh, they offered to maintain her and her child all their lives ; though, at the ſame time, they threatened her with yet harder things than ſhe had met with, if ſhe refuſed *to ſatisfy the pariſh*: But all this addreſs did not accompliſh the end they ſo much wiſhed to attain, the moment they left her, ſhe tried to eſcape from future violence by leaving the country ; but here ſhe was diſappointed, being cloſely guarded by night and by day. The ſecond night the mob again aſſembled ; and Will. Mabon, who had them under abſolute command, went to her brother John, and told him to go to Iſobel and tell her, that ſix of the ſtrongeſt men in the pariſh had engaged themſelves to throw her into the river Tweed, if that night ſhe did not *give*

them

them satisfaction. In the mean time, Mabon set a guard upon her brother's house, to preserve it from violence till he should return with her answer. Upon this, her father, her sisters, and brothers, wept around her, and besought her to give the people some satisfaction;—not for her own sake only, but for theirs and for their children; for they told her, that that night their houses were to be set on fire, if something was not done to *quench the mob;*—if at least, she did not free Robert Bunzie. When she was in this situation, just then appeared Mabon with his trusty band, ready to execute his threatenings. She had not a moment's time for recollection, What could she do? Overpowered by terror and entreaty, she said at last, "Well then, I will free Robert Bunzie, at the "peril of my life; but another man I never will file." and peremptorily refused to say any more; and even of this, that very night she declared her repentance.

THUS was she persecuted for three successive nights, during which time she told them she had born a second child, and informed them when and where this happened, and where the child was; but they, pretending to disbelieve her declaration, gave information against her as a murderer, and obtained a warrant to carry her a prisoner 12 miles (to Jedburgh) for examination. She was then committed into the custody of constables. Whilst she was in this tremendous situation, Bunzie and Grierson thought it a proper time to operate upon her and her friends: By the terror of a new-collected mob, they caused some of her relations sign a paper, importing, "That, to the best of their belief, not Robert Bunzie "but Mr Maclagan was the father of Isobel Mein's child." Having succeeded thus far, Bunzie and Grierson went to Isobel herself, and thought to persuade her to declare Bunzie perfectly innocent; but she, having rather gathered courage by oppression, to their utter astonishment

boldly

boldly accuſed Bunzie to his face, "told him to hold "his peace, for he was a bad man; and reminded him of "his coming to her in the mornings when in bed, after "her father went out to his work:" Thus was he ſilenced, and left her, and never after that moment could ſhe be perſuaded to free him; but ſaid, again and again, "Robert Bunzie is a bad man, and I will uphold him to "be ſuch." When ſhe was brought before the Sheriff, ſhe confeſſed ſhe had born a ſecond child, with which he being ſatisfied, ſhe was diſmiſſed; and was thus delivered from the hands of lawleſs violence, to the inexpreſſible grief of Grierſon, who had done her the honour of accompanying her to Jedburgh. The moment ſhe was ſet at liberty ſhe wrote to the Preſbytery, confeſſing ſhe had born a ſecond child, and accuſing Robert Bunzie as the father of both.

A FEW weeks after this, the other perſons named in Mr Maclagan's petition and complaint, given in to the Preſbytery, were examined, and fully ſubſtantiated almoſt every article of Iſobel Mein's declaration, and fully cleared Mr Maclagan's character;—which ought to have ſatisfied every honeſt man.

Mr MACLAGAN's adverſaries, having thus found all their arts and violence avail them nothing, and being juſtly afraid of that puniſhment which the illegality of their conduct juſtly merited, were now only ſolicitous for their own ſafety, and thought of nothing leſs than giving Mr Maclagan a libel. But a circumſtance at that time happened, which, though trivial in itſelf, was great in its conſequences, as it renewed their courage and gave vigour to their operations. It is therefore neceſſary that the particulars of it be candidly related, though Mr Maclagan does it with reluctance: There is one Mr Riddle, a writer, who ſometimes reſides in Melroſe, and

who is extremely *zealous* in maintaining the authority of the game laws in their full extent;—two of Mr Maclagan's boys having killed some partridges, Mr Riddle wrote Mr Maclagan a very imperious and indiscreet letter, *upon which he immediately ordered his sons to desist from that diversion:* But happening to meet with Mr Riddle soon after, on his way to Edinburgh, and receiving some very indiscreet language upon that affair, he bore it rather impatiently; and now candidly confesses, that he did speak a little ludicrously of the affected greatness of this *great man*. Upon that occasion Mr Riddle swore he would be revenged; and accordingly, that very week set out post from Edinburgh to Melrose; where he got together some gentlemen of his own profession; they then sent for Grierson and other elders, and, having heard their story, they gathered all their slanders into a body, put them into form, and wrote a paper to be circulated through the parish, and subscribed by the parishioners, *binding the subscribers* to bear the expence of prosecuting Mr Maclagan. Mr Riddle went and personally solicited the subscription of some of the heritors of the parish, who gave too easy credit to fabrications, presented to them by such authority. Thus some of the heritors, gentlemen who are second to none in honour and humanity, became parties in a process which was begun and carried on to satisfy the private personal resentment of Mr Riddle.——Several advocates and many writers were now employed.

FROM the time of Mr Riddle's engaging in this business *with such malignity*, the elders and others before mentioned, are not to be considered in any other light, than as the willing instruments of his revenge; and the subsequent conduct of the cause is to be *viewed in a very different light from what is above narrated, being now*

now the deliberate ſchemes of ſcientific men, who, by the methods they took, ſeemed to be firmly determined, right or wrong, to ruin Mr Maclagan. In order to obtain this end, the whole powers of their genius were exerted, and every legal artifice was employed. Concerning Mr Gray, their agent in Edinburgh, who acted under Mr Riddle's immediate direction, Mr Maclagan does not heſitate to ſay, *he* employed artifices which *were neither legal nor worthy of a gentleman*

A LIBEL was now framed againſt Mr Maclagan, and preſented to the Preſbytery on the 1ſt of March 1784; and the Preſbytery, for reaſons beſt known to themſelves, referred the matter to the Synod for advice.

THE proſecutors pretended to be much offended at the Preſbytery for adviſing with the Synod, but more truly were alarmed at the delay; becauſe they were afraid that the temper of the country would gradually become more reaſonable, and they would loſe the effect of that violence, from which they hoped to find many witneſſes ready to ſwear *with hearty good-will to their cauſe*. They could have no other reaſon than this for the bold deſign which they then formed of having Mr Maclagan tried for his life at Jedburgh, at the enſuing April Circuit. For this purpoſe they applied to the Lord Advocate to iſſue criminal letters *againſt Mr Maclagan;* but he juſtly refuſed to take their affirmations for facts, and therefore ordered a precognition to be taken, before he would give his concurrence. This was accordingly done, and Mr Maclagan was allowed to be preſent and have a copy. It was there that the vigour of able and impartial magiſtrates unvailed the ſcene of iniquity;—it was there, that, by the keen inveſtigation of the Sheriff of Edinburgh, who always deſerves ſo well

of his country, truth was laid open and the plans of Mr Maclagan's enemies utterly destroyed. There Isobel Mein was twice examined, and confirmed, with many additional circumstances, her former declarations; and all the persons examined by him gave full proof of the abandoned character of Janet Bunzie and her husband,—of their notorious falsehood and base attempts in this present cause, and their malignity to Mr Maclagan *. The natural consequence of all this was, that the crown lawyers unanimously refused to give their concurrence in a criminal prosecution: *And, if the gentlemen engaged had had either justice or humanity, they would here have put a stop to all further prosecution; but so far were they from this*, that they appeared at the Presbytery upon the first of May, and not only insisted upon the libel formerly given in, but also gave in a second libel,—the articles of which were rather like the ebullitions of madness then the act of men who were in their sober senses, and had any regard to truth or their own character. The most of the articles of the libel were declared by the Presbytery to be incredible, and the remaining ones declared false by the Commission of last General Assembly; and on that account the subscribers are now lying under the infamy, and subject to the censure *due to calumniators and slanderers*.

* It has been said, that Mr Maclagan's acquital depended upon his throwing Janet Bunzie and her husband from being witnesses against him; but, though he laboured this point with justice and success, yet his security did not rest there; for as every word of their declarations before the Sheriff, when they mention any other person, was contradicted by these persons upon oath, Mr Maclagan was therefore perfectly secure of reprobating, by faithful witnesses, their testimonies as utterly false, though they had not been set aside for malice and subornation.

When Mr Maclagan was ſerved with the firſt libel, he ſcorned to ſcreen himſelf under the forms of law, he wiſhed to meet his proſecutors in the open field of fair inveſtigation, he paſſed over every informality in the libel, and conduct of the libellers; of *one hundred and forty witneſſes*, he only excepted againſt *three*, viz. Robert Bunzie, who was accuſed by Iſobel Mein; Janet, his infamous ſiſter; and Reid, her huſband. His exceptions were ſo well founded and fully verified, with reſpect to the two laſt, that they were not only rejected, but rejected with deſerved infamy by the Commiſſion of laſt General Aſſembly. Mr Maclagan's proſecutors did not meet him upon equal grounds,—every art was employed to ſupport the credit of thoſe worthleſs witneſſes; upon every point, *even the moſt untenable*, did they take appeals, and create delays, which they might have known could ſerve no end, but to ruin Mr Maclagan's family by the expence: *Thirty appeals and upwards* were taken to the Synod, and all without ſucceſs; ſeven of what they thought moſt important being carried to the General Aſſembly, were, every one of them, declared to be frivolous and vexatious.——There was not a ſingle witneſs adduced for any purpoſe by Mr Maclagan, againſt whom they did not plead the moſt abſurd exceptions. They ſucceeded in nothing. They had it not in their power to ſet aſide any of his witneſſes but one, or to contradict, in the ſmalleſt article, the depoſitions of any of them. *There was ſcarcely a word uttered by Mr Maclagan in an unguarded moment, in the heat of debate, of which they did not endeavour to take the moſt ungenerous and unjuſt advantage*, in order, if poſſible, to bring his cauſe into diſcredit with his judges.

In ſhort, to every impartial perſon they muſt appear to have acted like men, who, having no hope of ſucceſs, laid down a deliberate plan to calumniate, to teaſe, to perplex, and to diſtreſs Mr Maclagan; and, if poſſible, to ruin his family by an accumulated expence, which they had too good cauſe to know he was very little able to bear. But, confiding in his God, his innocence, and the juſtice of the meaſures he purſued for his own defence, he has at laſt brought the proceſs to a concluſion. The proſecutors failed ſo totally in their proof, that they were not able to form a pleading upon it: And the Preſbytery, upon the 31ſt of Auguſt, after having fully adviſed the proof, gave final judgment, aſſoilzying him from every charge contained in the libel.

MR MACLAGAN wiſhed to have publiſhed the proof itſelf, but the expence attending ſuch publication put it out of his power. Having given this hiſtory of the riſe, progreſs, and concluſion of the proceſs, wholly founded upon it; he begs, in ſupport of the purity of his character, an indulgent attention to a few arguments deduced from that hiſtory and from the proof itſelf; which he has no doubt will ſatisfy every candid reader.

IN the *firſt* place, Mr Maclagan thought it neceſſary to adduce witneſſes to prove the character of Robert Bunzie, who is accuſed by Iſobel Mein as the father of her children;—the witneſſes adduced for that purpoſe univerſally bear teſtimony to him, as an honeſt man and very good neighbour; but, when queſtioned concerning his character for licentious intercourſe with women, they almoſt as univerſally refuſed to anſwer queſtions upon that ſubject. This proves to a demonſtration, that in this reſpect his character is not equally pure. This of itſelf gives a ſtrong preſumption to the truth of Iſobel Mein's charge againſt him; eſpecially when it is conſidered, that ſhe lived within a few yards of his houſe, and had many opportunities of criminal intercourſe without the reach of public obſervation; and this will make the more deep impreſſion when it is farther conſidered, that ſhe could be under no poſſible temptation to accuſe him *falſely*. He was a married man, he had always lived in intimate correſpondence with her father's family, and ſhe could not expect to obtain any pecuniary advantage by accuſing him *falſely*. Had Mr Maclagan been the guilty man, and had Iſobel meant

meant no more than to ſcreen him from puniſhment, Robert Bunzie would have been the laſt man in the world ſhe would have choſen to accuſe; much more naturally would ſhe have been led to have given her child to ſome young man, to ſome ſtranger, or have refuſed to delate any perſon at all: either of which ſchemes would have ſerved the purpoſe infinitely better than to have accuſed Bunzie *falſely*.——Have Mr Maclagan's proſecutors indeed found him ſo great a fool, as to ſuppoſe, that, if he had been adviſing Iſobel Mein, he would have overlooked theſe plain and obvious circumſtances, and have put her upon a plan, every way ſo abſurd? Surely no perſuaſion, but the force of truth, could have induced her to accuſe Robert Bunzie as the father of her children.

In the *ſecond* place, It appears plainly from the proof, That, when Iſobel Mein was four months gone with child, Robert Bunzie ſent for his ſiſter from Edinburgh, who perſuaded Iſobel to go to Edinburgh to conceal her pregnancy; that, at that critical time, Robert, and he only, was induſtrious to calumniate Mr Maclagan's character; that Robert Grierſon, after having concerted with Bunzie, did adviſe Iſobel to go to Edinburgh; that ſhe accordingly went, and lived with Janet Bunzie; that Janet did take care of her in every reſpect, till ſhe was delivered and returned home; and ſo far was Janet from appearing to have been in confidence and correſpondence with Mr Maclagan, that, at that very time, ſhe is proven to have entertained the moſt determined malice againſt him,—in ſo much, that ſhe ſwore by the LORD GOD ſhe would ruin him for the ſake of her brother. Now, let any candid man ſay if any thing can appear more natural than the conduct of theſe people, ſuppoſing Bunzie guilty. In his perplexity

plexity he applies to his ſiſter, whoſe character he well knew, who lived in a place convenient, and was deeply experienced in ſuch tranſactions; he neither was afraid of a refuſal nor treachery, he met with neither; but met with aſſiſtance beyond what, at that time, he had the wickedneſs to wiſh for.

On the other hand, ſuppoſing the charge in the libel had been true, and Mr Maclagan had been reduced to the unhappy neceſſity of concealing his connection with Iſobel Mein, can it be ſuppoſed that he is ſo perfectly devoid of common-ſenſe, as to have truſted a ſecret of that importance to any woman in the world!—If he muſt have employed a woman, that he would have committed himſelf to the mercy of one of a character ſo utterly abandoned as Janet Bunzie!—If no perſon but ſome abandoned wretch could have been prevailed upon to aſſiſt in concealing his crimes, that he would have been ſo mad as to employ one who knew him, who knew he was a clergyman, whoſe friends all lived in his immediate neighbourhood, and who might have kept him under perpetual terror and *contribution!* Will it be believed, that Mr Maclagan is ſo ignorant as not to know, that a ſmall ſum of money, well applied by the public officers in Edinburgh, could hide any ſuch tranſaction in darkneſs, and baffle inveſtigation? When therefore, on the one hand, preſumptions againſt Bunzie are ſo ſtrong as almoſt to amount to demonſtration,—his conduct appearing artful, prudent, and perfectly well calculated to ſerve his purpoſe; and, on the other hand, ſuppoſing the libel true, Mr Maclagan's conduct appears prepoſterous, irrational, and mad,—in ſo much, that the very ſuppoſition of it is ridiculous. Can any man of ſenſe heſitate to decide which of the two is innocent?

BUT the proof farther says, that Bunzie's sister provided every thing necessary for Isobel Mein; not only when she lived in her house, but when she lived in Maxwell's, and even carried her victuals, ready dressed, more then half the length of the town of Edinburgh; that Isobel had no money but what she got from Janet; that the midwife, nurse, &c. were all paid by Janet, who also took care of the child from the moment it was born; and that her intimacy continued with Isobel till the elders were sent into Edinburgh by Robert Bunzie. When these things are duly considered, let any man say, if it is possible they could have happened had Mr Maclagan had any connections with Isobel Mein. Can it be supposed he would have employed Janet to have carried ready dressed victuals to Isobel, when she could so easily have provided and dressed them for herself? Will it believe, that he employed Bunzie to give her the only money she got, had it been true, as is averred in the libel, that he himself saw her so often? Is it consistent with the affection he is supposed by the libel to have maintained for Isobel, to leave her thus miserably dependant upon Bunzie; or that, in her circumstances, she would with patience have born that dependence? Would Janet Bunzie have haggled to reduce the price of the midwife, on account of the poverty of the father of the child, if Mr Maclagan had been that father? Is there need for reasoning here?—a person with half an eye may discern the truth.

3dly, IT is plainly proven, and merits notice, That Robert Bunzie, and he only, did falsely calumniate Mr Maclagan's character, just before Isobel Mein went to live with his sister, in the beginning of the year 1782; that at that very time Robert Grierson, and his friend Janet Bunzie, strongly concurred in advising Isobel Mein

Mein to leave the country; that, very ſoon thereafter Janet ſwore, by the LORD GOD ſhe would ruin Mr Maclagan for her brother's ſake. Farther, let it be remarked, that after Robert Bunzie had returned from Edinburgh in the year 1783, having privately communed with Grierſon and Mabon, he was the firſt who informed the country of Iſobel Mein's having born a child,—and the firſt who accuſed Mr Maclagan as the father of it; that, after Robert left Edinburgh, Janet Bunzie and her huſband were the firſt and only perſons to defame Mr Maclagan's character in town. Let it be noticed with what aſſiduity and earneſtneſs, at that time, Bunzie and her huſband propagated their ſtory in Edinburgh: Let it not be forgotten, that theſe perſons are convicted of malice againſt Mr Maclagan, of tampering with witneſſes, and of ſtrong attempts to ſuborn them. Let theſe things all be duly conſidered; and then, ſuppoſing the libel true, let any man ſay upon what principles theſe people have acted in the whole tranſaction. What motive had they to accuſe Mr Maclagan? what reaſon for ſuch violence againſt him? Why take unlawful methods to procure his condemnation?—Were they actuated by a principle of virtue?—it is not amongſt adulterers and bawdy-houſe keepers ſhe takes up her pure and ſacred habitation. Was it becauſe they had a reſpect to their own character? Was not their voluntary accuſation of Mr Maclagan, ſuppoſing it true, a wanton publication of their own wickedneſs and diſgrace? Did they act by a principle of avarice? Had the libel been true, this might have perſuaded them to conceal, but never to publiſh it. Or, finally, Was it conſcience?—is there an honeſt man on earth who will be found to ſay, that he believes there is the ſmalleſt principle of conſcience amongſt them? In ſhort, upon the ſuppoſition of Mr Maclagan having any intereſt in this matter, the Bun-

zies and Reid have acted in direct contradiction to every known principle of human nature, whether good or bad: But, upon the supposition of Bunzie's guilt, their whole conduct proceeds from obvious principles, founded upon their particular circumstances; for to conceal Robert's guilt, to avoid a ruinous expence, to satiate private revenge, and to earn the sums of money which Grierson, Mabon, and Gray liberally bestowed upon them, are powers sufficient, in minds like theirs, to cause them perpetrate any species of villany.

4thly, HAVING thus seen the part the Bunzies have acted, in conjunction with the prosecutors, let the conduct of Isobel Mein now be carefully investigated, as appearing in proof, and Mr Maclagan is convinced it will strongly enforce the persuasion of his innocence.

WHILST she was under the care of Janet Bunzie, little or nothing can be discovered from her; even when she was carried to Leith by Grierson and Reid, as she did not then know the hand that Bunzie had in the violence done to her, she carefully concealed her secret, and peremptorily refused to declare the father of her child; only saying, "they would find themselves mistaken in the man they *wished her to accuse*." But no sooner did she find herself deserted by the Bunzies, than she was seen, in a sort of despair, opening up her mind to the midwife, to whom she often said, that Robert Bunzie, Janet's brother, was the father of her children. She who, a little while ago, was seen plentifully supplied with every thing necessary, then appeared to be in extreme want; so that the midwife advised her to put herself into the hands of the Kirk-treasurer for immediate subsistence, which she accordingly did. Now, will any man of common sense say, that, if Mr Maclagan

gan had maintained Isobel Mein before this, he would now have left her, even to the necessity of selling her very clothes for immediate support. Would he have thus acted by the supposed object of his affections? Was this a time in which he durst have deserted her? Would he not rather now have doubled his assiduity and attention towards her? that, if possible, she might be preserved firm and secret. Could it be any thing but the desertion of the Bunzies which reduced her to this distress? and, when in that distress, she did not apply for any help to Mr Maclagan, for with him she had no concern. And it is evident from the proof, that, at this time, neither the nurse, nor midwife, nor Mrs Maxwell, with whom she staid, had ever seen the face, or so much as heard of the name of Mr Maclagan; so far was he from keeping up the intercourse with Isobel Mein so falsely averred in the libel.

It will not surprise any person, who has attended to the oppressive and illegal conduct of the elders, that Isobel Mein did not obey the summons to appear before Melrose session; but whenever she was summoned before a court where she had reason to hope for justice, she gave immediate obedience; and there, in the presence of Bunzie himself, she openly accused him, and expressly vindicated Mr Maclagan. But it must have excited the indignation of every unprejudiced man, to have observed what arts were used to prevent her from telling the truth,—what violent methods were employed to make her retract her declaration after it was emitted; to see an outrageous mob, headed by Grierson and Mabon, those venerable elders, raging in the darkest hours of the night, with multitudes roaring like a tempest, on purpose to intimidate the mind of a single fearful young woman

woman. What man of virtue can maintain even a juſt moderation, when he ſees men of their character in cloſeſt intimacy with adulterers and bawdy-houſe keepers; when he hears thoſe men, of *ſacred character*, telling Iſobel Mein, that, whatever ſhe is, whatever ſhe has done, whatever ſins ſhe may have committed, ſhe will be reſpected, beloved, and regarded, if ſhe will only retract her declaration; yea, when thoſe elders are heard proſtituting the public faith, and, in name of the pariſh of Melroſe, promiſing to maintain her and her children all their lives, if ſhe will only ſatisfy them in this article;—whilſt thus, on the one hand, theſe arts are employed to make her retract; and, on the other, ſhe is ſeen alone in the midſt of an enraged multitude—a priſoner, with nothing before her but hatred, contempt, and baniſhment from her friends for ever, if ſhe refuſed to gratify the multitude. Is not her ſteadineſs, in ſuch circumſtances, a proof of truth beyond many witneſſes? Let it not be ſaid, that her freeing Bunzie, at the peril of her life, will ſhake her credibility; for whoever conſiders the circumſtances of this tranſaction, will find it rather confirm than impeach her truth, eſpecially as that very night ſhe declared her repentance of what ſhe had ſaid; and next day, in preſence of Grierſon, ſhe accuſed Bunzie to his face, and never afterwards varied from that declaration. A falſe declaration may have been prepared and uttered before a court, but this preparation could not have pervaded a long courſe of conduct, and never be contradicted by any circumſtance; ſome particulars will always, in ſuch caſes, be found to diſarrange ſuch fabrication, and truth will burſt forth in ſpite of all reſtraint; but no ſuch thing ever happened in the preſent caſe. Yea, Mr Maclagan begs attention to a ſtrong part of the proof, where preparation was impoſſible. So long ago as harveſt 1782,

Iſobel

Iſobel Mein, returning to Newſtead from Whinfield, where ſhe had been ſhearing, in company with William Miller, her brother-in-law, whilſt, upon that occaſion, ſhe was full of mirth and jollity, Miller accidentally mentioned the name of Bunzie, in a moment Iſobel loſt her cheerfulneſs, her conſcience ſeemed to ſmite her, and ſhe haſtily cried out, "Robert Bunzie is a bad man." This unexpected ſpeech ſtruck Miller, and ſtill more did her ſudden and unexpected ſeriouſneſs. This inſtigated him to put the queſtion, "Why do you ſay "ſo; did he ever do you any harm?" once and again did he put it, and it was with much difficulty he brought her at laſt to ſay, "he has done me too much;" but ſhe would explain herſelf no farther. This could be no premeditated ſcheme; it was not at this time known that Iſobel Mein had born a child, and Bunzie was not then even ſuſpected with her. It was nature, it was truth burſting from a troubled mind,—the teſtimony of which leaves an impreſſion almoſt equal to conviction upon the mind of every unprejudiced man; but when all this is conſidered, in conjunction with what is above ſet forth of the conduct of the Bunzies, it is evidence even to a demonſtration.

5thly, THE libel ſets forth, That Mr Maclagan was ſo mad with paſſion for Iſobel Mein, that, even after he had been publicly defamed on that account, and adviſed to give up correſpondence with her and her friends, he obſtinately perſiſted in his criminal intercourſe, and continued it for many years, in many different places.—— That a man, regardleſs of the opinion of the world, after he is diſcovered, may maintain his correſpondence with the woman he loves, is poſſible: But this ſurely has hardly ever happened to a man who pays the ſmalleſt reſpect to decency; but for a clergyman, who without

out character is contemptible, who, if discovered, must be ruined; for such a man, in the midst of suspicion, when the eyes of hundreds were upon him,—whose jealousy maintained a constant watch by night and by day, so that his most innocent looks were misconstructed;—for one in these circumstances to maintain such a correspondence is the most unsupposable madness; for Mr Maclagan to have done it, perfectly impossible. He lives at a full mile's distance from Newstead, the place where Isobel Mein lived: and both Melrose and Newstead are populous villages, so that even the foot-path betwen them is the most frequented road in the parish. He lives in the midst of a numerous family of children and servants, by whom discovery would have been unavoidable; for him, in such circumstances, to have attempted it would have been madness, to have done it impossible. Accordingly no such correspondence ever existed, though his prosecutors have accused him boldly. Now that the process is concluded, they have not produced a single witness to a single fact or circumstance contained in the libel; not the shadow of unreprobated proof, of the smallest impropriety of Mr Maclagan's conduct concerning Isobel Mein; or any one who ever saw him with her in any of the places mentioned in the libel. Whereas, every person related to Isobel, with whom she lived, who must have seen suspicious circumstances, if any such had existed, universally and expressly depone, That they never saw the smallest impropriety in Mr Maclagan's conduct respecting *her;* and every servant, both man and woman, who served him during that period, uniformly unite in deponing to the same thing; so that every syllable of the libel must appear a daring fabrication of the prosecutors.

Mr

Mr MACLAGAN was going finally to add, That the manner in which he has uniformly conducted himself in his family, in his parish, and in the world in general, *ought surely, with candid minds, to have strongly ballanced in his favour, even in opposition to presumptions*, if such had appeared against him: For, without being thought guilty of arrogance, he thinks himself entitled to plead his character, on which malice itself had never fixed a stain; and his conduct as a minister, which the worst of his enemies have, upon oath, been obliged to confess was more then above the reach of censure: But he scorns to use the argument, it was not necessary in the process, it is not necessary with impartial men; for, from first to last, so perfectly unfounded is the libel, nothing has ever appeared against him which could make the most perfect character to blush.

UPON one circumstance indeed did the prosecutors triumph, and it is not doubted but it had a considerable influence upon the minds of many, to Mr Maclagan's prejudice. It was this, they produced a letter in process, said to be of Mr Maclagan's hand-writing, addressed to Mrs Reid. To prove this letter to be his hand-writing, they aduced witnesses who freely swore that they *believed* it to be his; but some of these very witnesses, when afterwards cited by Mr Maclagan, peremptorily refused to swear whether a paper produced by him was of *their own hand-writing*, which made their former depositions appear in a very strange light. The truth is, Mr Maclagan freely acknowledges, that the letter bears a strong resemblance to his hand, though he is positive he never wrote a word of it: But, concerning it he begs leave to observe, that nothing is more easy than to fabricate an imitation of any man's hand; of this he gave a demonstration, by produ-

cing to the Preſbytery ſuch perfect imitations of the writings and ſubſcriptions of moſt of the members of court, and of other people, that they themſelves could not diſtinguiſh them from the originals; and from this he did plead, that little ſtreſs could be laid upon ſuch evidence, when the letter itſelf can by no means be traced, by any circumſtance, to Mr Maclagan, and bears not his ſubſcription. But this will appear much ſtronger when it is conſidered, that this letter is ſaid to have originated from Janet Bunzie, whoſe notorious bad character makes every thing ſuſpected which came from her hands; but infinitely more ſo in the preſent caſe,—ſhe has been convicted of entertaining determined malice againſt Mr Maclagan, and attempting to ſuborn witneſſes to ſwear againſt him. Beſides, the letter is uſhered into notice by Will. Reid, her huſband, who pretended he picked it up when it fell accidentally from his wife's pocket. Now, this Reid is proven to have perjured himſelf concerning that very letter. Will any man then give credit to any thing coming from ſuch a contaminated ſource—from perſons, who, by a ſentence of the ſupreme court, are declared infamous and unworthy of any credibility? But what is more to Mr Maclagan's purpoſe than all this is, that he found an opportunity of examining John Boſton, an elder, and Robert Grierſon, a proſecutor, who firſt ſaw this letter in the hands of Reid, and both theſe perſons concur in giving upon oath a preciſe and determinate account of its contents; but when the letter itſelf is examined and compared with their depoſitions, it in no particular *appears to be the letter ſeen by them. This ſurely has a very ugly appearance. That there were two letters never was pretended even by themſelves. Is it not then evident to a demonſtration, that, upon ſecond thoughts, they had found their firſt fabrication not properly conſtructed; and therefore they were under the neceſſity to begin*

begin afresh and fabricate a second letter, which they laid their account with supporting, some way or other, by the proof, though in this, after all, they entirely failed. Such is the fabrication with which the prosecutors have paraded and *amused* the world, but which now must be considered as overwhelming themselves with dishonour.

It has been a very melancholy thing, *for Mr Maclagan to be obliged,* during the course of this process, to observe how fatal the influence of prejudice and passion is in the human mind; as to this alone he could attribute the many *direct falsehoods* to which the witnesses of the prosecutors have been guilty of swearing, of which Mr Maclagan has produced the most plain and peremptory proofs. It is exceedingly unfortunate for a witness, when he allows passion to dictate his deposition, or when he has a strong inclination to serve a party; but facts are stubborn things, and yeild not to the boisterous tides of passion. By facts Mr Maclagan has accomplished his perfect justification before the Ecclesiastical courts; and he is fully persuaded, that, upon the same immoveable foundation of truth, he has clearly established himself in the good opinion of every candid man. And, now that he has had an opportunity of being heard for himself, he refuses to be indebted to favour,—he appeals to the candid and the just, with them truth and justice must prevail; and by them, he is well assured, he must now be restored to the honour of his name, the dearest of his rights, from which he has been for some time so unjustly cast down. Having obtained this he has only one wish more; and that is, that he may be again restored to his usefulness. He entertains the firmest faith in our holy religion, the most ardent love to Christianity and its divine author; he never had a greater ambition than to be useful and found

faithful in his ſervice; and he fondly hoped, that, as in the pariſh of Melroſe he had long laboured with unremitting aſſiduity, ſo he had not laboured in vain: But no tongue can expreſs how much he feels dejected, when, from the preſent ſtate of the pariſh, he ſees his long and painful labours as it were entirely *blaſted*. Still deeper is his dejection, when he looks foreward to the uncomfortable, untried path of duty which is before him; but as, by the bleſſing of God, he has hitherto kept a good conſcience; ſo, with unremitting attention, will he labour, that his God may approve, and his conſcience may teſtify for him in his laſt moments. He trembles indeed, leſt the arduous duties ſuited to his preſent ſtate be above his reach, though he ardently wiſhes to teach Chriſtianity even as a ſufferer.

O THOU who inſpireſt the ſouls of men with the ſublime virtues of the character of the Author of the Chriſtian faith, give him meekneſs, give him patience, give him ſteadineſs of mind; O give him a merciful and forgiving ſpirit; and do thou, Father of mercies, hide from thine eyes for ever the ſins of his people, and bleſs the Pariſh of Melroſe with every bleſſing in Chriſt Jeſus.